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For Immediate Release

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Lawmakers Launch Healthy Michigan Caucus to Promote Better Health

Lansing — State Senator Beverly S. Hammerstrom (R-Temperance) joined her colleagues in kicking off the Healthy Michigan Caucus today at a Capitol press conference.

Legislators from the Senate and the House joined with Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, members of the Department of Community Health, the Governor's office, and the Michigan Public Health Institute to promote physical and fiscal health and call attention to the debilitating effects of chronic diseases on our state's residents and economy.

"As the Legislature and the Governor grapple with the state budget, it is important to highlight the enormous cost of unhealthy lifestyles. We can no longer afford the poor eating habits and the lack of exercise which lead to chronic diseases," Hammerstrom said.

The Healthy Michigan Caucus was formed by a bi-partisan, bi-cameral group of legislators who attended a recent forum on chronic disease prevention and management sponsored by the National Governors Association. Through the forum it became clear that the fiscal health of our state depends upon the physical health of our residents.

Legislators invited members of the Executive Branch to join them in a spirited challenge to help "cut the fat out of state government." Those who accepted the challenge were given pedometers to keep track of the number of steps they take from December 8 to April 2. The challenge was enthusiastically accepted with the Senate, House and Executive members predicting victory for their respective "teams."

"The participants want to send a message that we can all be more active and lead a more healthy life. 55% of Michigan residents are inactive and we hope they will be encouraged to join us in moving Michigan to the top of list in preventing chronic diseases," Hammerstrom said.

The Department of Community Health – Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Control provides these statistics regarding the health status of Michigan residents:

- Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is the number one cause of adult death in Michigan. Almost half of all deaths in Michigan are due to CVD.
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Michigan.

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- Smoking is responsible for 90 percent of all lung cancers and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, resulting in 15,000 deaths in Michigan each year.
- In Michigan, over 1 million adults have diabetes or prediabetes.
- Asthma is the leading cause of preventable hospitalizations in Michigan.
- Michigan is second only to Mississippi in having the most obese and overweight residents.
- Eight out of 10 Michigan adults have at least one risk factor for chronic disease – smoking, poor eating habits, physical inactivity, high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

Michigan residents who are interested in learning more about risk factors for chronic diseases or how to begin their journey to better health can visit the Michigan Department of Community Health's website at www.michigan.gov/mdch and click on the "Physical Health & Prevention" link.

Legislative co-chairs of the Healthy Michigan Caucus are Senators Hammerstrom and Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), and Representatives Gary Newell (R-Saranac) and Steve Adamini (D-Marquette).

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Editor's note: a photo of Senator Hammerstrom is available on the internet at: www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Hammerstrom/Hammerstrom.htm

Dec. 3, 2003 — Senator Beverly S. Hammerstrom (R-Temperance) recently accepted a challenge to get fit on behalf of the Michigan State Senate from state Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom. Hammerstrom (center) is surrounded by fellow members of the newly formed Healthy Michigan Caucus. The kick-off of the bi-partisan effort connecting physical health with fiscal health was announced at a Capitol press conference earlier today.